

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 – 10: Cancelled

11. (currently amended) An apparatus for introducing gas into a liquid, comprising:

a rigid profiled support member, wherein said support member defines a space and is provided with at least one recessed area; and

an elastic tube disposed on said profiled support member, wherein said elastic tube is provided with elastically expandable slits, wherein compressed air or gas is guided exclusively between the profiled support member and the tube, wherein the compressed air or gas is not guided into the space defined by the profiled support member, and wherein the compressed air or gas is adapted to escape into the liquid, in the form of bubbles, through said slits when they are expanded, wherein said profiled support member has a circular cross-sectional configuration, wherein said elastic tube encases said profiled support member, and wherein recessed areas are disposed on sides of said profiled support member.

12. (canceled)

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said elastic tube has ends that are secured via clamps to said profiled support

member, wherein fillers are disposed in said at least one recessed area on a longitudinal portion of said profiled support member on which said clamps are disposed, and wherein said fillers restore an outer contour of said profiled support member to a shape that said profiled support member would have without said at least one recessed area.

17. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said fillers restore the outer contour of said profiled support member to a circular shape.

18. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said fillers are made of rubber or a material similar to rubber.

19. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said elastic tube, at least at one end thereof, is secured to said profiled support member via clamps, and wherein in the region of said clamps, said profiled support member has no recessed area and an outer perimeter of said profiled support member corresponds at least to an inner diameter of said elastic tube.

20. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein in the region of its securement to said profiled support member, said elastic tube has no elastically expandable slits.